(d) Pesticides being toxic in nature, their misuse/abuse can cause hazards. Cases of accidental and non-accidental nature of pesticides poisoning including deaths of human beings are being reported by the State Governments from time to time. During the last three years i.e. 1988-89 to 1990-91, more than 3,000 case of pesticide poisoning were reported by the State Governments, as per available statistics. There are no chances of human loss due to pesticide resistance in different pests. No separate statistics are available for human loss due to food contamination. However, it is presumed that the statistics on pesticide poisoning cases include cases of human loss due to poisoning/contamination as well. Nevertheless, under the Insecticides Act, 1968 and the Rules framed thereunder there is a provision of prohibition on admixing of pesticides in foodgrains legally avoiding thereby the phenomenon of pesticide contamination in foodgrains. There are no reports of considerable damage to water in the country due to pollution from pesticides; though there are some reports of minor contamination. No systematic studies are readily available to quantity the losses in soil fertility due to pesticides. However, some pesticides have been reported toxic in earthworm. Considering the usefulness of bees in pollination of crop plants such a study has been made as an important parameter of registration requirement for insecticides under the Insecticides Act, 1968.

(e) The Government has taken a number of steps to prevent the health hazards due to use/abuse of pesticides. The pesticides which are safe to human beings, animals and the environment, are allowed to be registered for use in the country. Farmers are trained in safe and judicious use of pesticides by Extension Officers of the Government and other voluntary agencies. As a preventive measure, many of the extremely toxic pesticides have been banned or refused registration. To reduce/minimise the over-dependence on pesticides, Government have adopted Integrated Pest Management approach which *inter-alia* includes need-based application of pesticides at economic threshold levels of pets and diseases. Considerable attention is being paid to this concept of pest control which encompasses the use of cultural, mechanical and biological measures and only limited use of pesticides wherever necessary.

Indo-Venezuelan Cultural Agreement, 1984

1163. SHRI BIJOY KRISHNA HANDIQUE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of Indo-Venezuelan Cultural Agreement, 1984;

(b) the progress made so far in its implementation;

(c) whether any initiatives have been under way to achieve joint collaboration in the fields of agriculture, oil technology and bio-medicine; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) The Indo-Venezuelan Cultural Agreement signed on 13.9.1984 provides for promotion of better mutual understanding in the fields of art, literature, education, history, sports and other cultural and academic disciplines.

(b) Efforts are underway to conclude an executive programme of cultural exchanges with Venezuela.

(c) and (d). Do not arise as joint collaboration in these fields are not covered by the Cultural Agreement.